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INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
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RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003947

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/21/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [PINR](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: PRT TIKRIT: WHERE IS THE RECONCILIATION?

Classified By: Stephanie Miley, PRT Team Leader, for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

11. (U) This is a PRT Tikrit, Salah ad Din (SaD) cable.

12. (C) SUMMARY. In the wake of the province's first major episode of sectarian violence, provincial leaders held on October 19 a reconciliation meeting for Sunni and Shia tribal sheikhs, where sectarian violence was strongly denounced by both tribal and provincial leaders. However, noting the postponement of the next national reconciliation meeting (since rescheduled to November 4), the dismissal of over 400 re-hired teachers for their former affiliation with the Ba'ath party, and the Council of Representatives (CoR) decision to lift the immunity of Sunni MP and SaD native Mashan al Jabouri, Sunnis in Salad ad Din (SaD) have begun to question Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki's commitment to national reconciliation. We applaud the provincial government's efforts to stem sectarian divisions, but question SaD Sunnis' sustained commitment to reconciliation if they continue to see a lack of progress on the GOI's part.
END SUMMARY.

Sectarian Violence Reaches Balad

13. (C) On October 13 in the Sunni city of Dhuluiya, near the predominately Shia city of Balad, the bodies of 14 decapitated Shia workers were found. In swift reprisal, Shia residents from Balad, allegedly assisted by Jaysh al Mahadi (JAM) members from Baghdad, killed 26 Sunnis from villages surrounding Balad. Before SaD Governor Hamad Hamoud al Shakti had instituted a vehicular and pedestrian curfew on October 16, at least 31 persons in total had been killed.

14. (C) With the curfew largely quelling the violence, Governor Hamad and the provincial government sponsored a reconciliation meeting between Sunni and Shia tribal Sheikhs on October 18 in Tikrit. At the meeting, the leaders strongly denounced sectarian violence and called for the communities to return to their previous peaceful states. While acknowledging the benefit of the positive, anti-violence messages made at the meetings, several Sunni Provincial Council (PC) members commented to PRT officers that they thought the meeting lacked substance and practical steps forward. They questioned Balad area residents' commitment to keeping the province free of sectarian violence, especially with what they perceived as a growing presence of JAM.

Questioning the al Maliki Government's Commitment to Reconciliation

15. (C) Following the October 15 announcement of the indefinite postponement of the national reconciliation process (since resumed), several provincial government leaders told PRT officers they question the al Maliki government's commitment to the reconciliation process. Chair of the Provincial Council Sheikh Rasheed said that al Maliki's lack of movement on the process indicates that he is not committed to bring the Sunnis of Salah ad Din into the political fold.

16. (C) In addition, the SaD Directorate General of Education received on October 9 a letter from the Minister of Education ordering the province to dismiss the nearly 400 de-Ba'athified teachers the province had recently re-hired. Governor Hamad told PRT officers on October 19 that he questions if the GOI truly intends to re-consider de-Ba'athification policies, as it had ordered the dismissal of the teachers.

17. (C) Since the Council of Representative (CoR) lifted immunity from Sunni MP Mishan al Jabouri on October 8, several groups made peaceful, public demonstrations. Demonstrators and Provincial Council members told PRT officers that they believe it is unlikely that al Jabouri was involved in corruption because he was a member of the legislative branch which has no control over money. They questioned why, if he was corrupt, he was the only CoR member targeted. They surmised that the CoR decision was taken because he is outspoken about his position against the GOI's rapprochement with the Government of Iran and because he is a Sunni from a former Ba'athist stronghold. (NOTE: The charges

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against al Jabouri relate to the embezzlement of funding intended for oil pipeline protection during the Allawi government and do not relate to his duties as a legislator in the Transitional National Assembly or the Council of Representatives. END NOTE.)

Comment

18. (C) After holding a reconciliation meeting of their own, Sunnis in SaD are growing more frustrated with the GOI's lack of movement on national reconciliation. Sectarian violence is relatively new to the province, and we applaud the provincial government's efforts to stem the sectarian divisions. However, we wonder whether SaD Sunnis will sustain their commitment to reconciliation if they continue to see a lack of progress on the GOI's part. END COMMENT.

19. (U) For additional reporting from PRT Tikrit, Salah ad Din, please see our SIPRNET Reporting Blog:
<http://blogs.csp.sgov.gov/blojsom/blog/salahaddin/>.
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